

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6306
INFO USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MOSCOW 0743

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, NATO, UR

SUBJECT: THE SOVIET STAKE IN MBFR

REF: A. MOSCOW 19197; B. MOSCOW 0178

1. SUMMARY. WE BELIEVE THERE IS GROWING EVIDENCE THAT THE SOVIET UNION MAY BE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN A REASONABLY EARLY MBFR AGREEMENT. IN OUR VIEW MOSCOW MAY BE WILLING TO BE SOMEWHAT MORE FLEXIBLE THIS YEAR THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST IN ORDER TO REACH SUCH AN AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS MAY FEEL A NEED TO AVOID FAILURE IN MBFR TO MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM OF THEIR PEACE OFFENSIVE; MOREOVER, THEY SEEM REAL ADVANTAGES TO BOTH THEIR POLITICAL AND THEIR MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH WESTERN EUROPE. FOR THE KREMLIN, MBFR IS A CHANCE TO IMPOSE LIMITS ON FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUNDESWEHR, AND TO A LESSER EXTENT ON THE EUROGROUP AS WELL. MOSCOW REGARDS WITH MIXED FEELINGS POSSIBLE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WHICH WOULD PRE-DECIDE MBFR AND ROB IT OF THIS CHANCE. THE SOVIETS ALSO PROBABLY REGARD AN MBFR AGREEMENT AS A STABILIZING FACTOR ON THEIR WESTERN FRONT (WHICH WOULD INCREASE SOVIET FLEXIBILITY IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH PEKING) AND AS PART OF A PROCESS TOWARD REDUCING SOVIET DEFENSE EXPENDITURES.

2. WITH SUFFICIENT ASSURANCES ON STAGE-TWO LINKAGE AND BUNDESWEHR LIMITS, THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE INCLINED TO ACCEPT

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INITIAL SOVIET-U.S. REDUCTIONS. MOSCOW MAY SHOW MOST

FLEXIBILITY IN THE QUESTION OF A TRADE-OFF OF ASYMMETRIC GROUND FORCE CUTS FOR ASYMMETRIC WEAPONRY CUTS BY NATO. IT IS DIFFICULT TO JUDGE WHAT POSITION THE SOVIETS WILL TAKE ON FBS; OUR ESTIMATE, HOWEVER, IS THAT THEY WILL NOT INCREASE PRESSURE ON THIS ISSUE BEYOND THEIR ALREADY EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR AIR FORCE AND NUCLEAR WEAPON CUTS. REGARDING THE SIZE OF REDUCTIONS, WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF THEIR CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO NUMBERS, THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO TAILOR REDUCTIONS TO THE PALATABILITY OF THE AGREEMENT'S SUBSTANCE: THE LESS PALATABLE THE AGREEMENT, THE MORE TOKEN THE REDUCTIONS. REGARDING TIMING, DETENTE CONSIDERATIONS, THE CONCLUSION OF CSCE, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE AT MID-YEAR, AND ABOVE ALL THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS IN EARLY 1976 TAKEN TOGETHER WOULD SUGGEST SOVIET INTEREST IN MOVEMENT IN MBFR DURING THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

3. THE SOVIET VIEW OF MBFR. A. WE WOULD DISCOURAGE THE IDEA THAT ONLY NATO HAS AN INTEREST IN COMING TO AN AGREEMENT IN MBFR. WE SEE VARIOUS REASONS WHY THE SOVIET UNION WOULD BELIEVE IT TO BE IN ITS INTEREST TO REACH AN AGREEMENT. THE SOVIETS SEE CERTAIN POLITICAL ADVANTAGES TO BE GAINED FROM AN AGREEMENT TO REDUCE THE DEGREE OF MILITARY CONFRONTATION IN EUROPE. WE BELIEVE THAT THEY WILL BE WILLING TO BE MORE FLEXIBLE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN ON THE EXACT NATURE OF THE CUTS THEY TAKE IN THEIR FORCES, AS LONG AS (1) THE CUTS REMAIN MODERATE AND (2) THE CUTS DO NOT VIOLATE CERTAIN NON-NEGOTIABLE PRINCIPLES. WE DISCUSS THESE IN DETAIL BELOW.

B. THERE ARE SIGNS OF GROWING SOVIET IMPATIENCE AT THE LACK OF MOVEMENT IN THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS. THE OCTOBER 1974 WARSAW PACT PROPOSAL PROBABLY DID REFLECT A SERIOUSLY-INTENDED ATTEMPT TO MOVE THE NEGOTIATIONS OFF DEAD CENTER, REGARDLESS OF OUR EVALUATION OF ITS ACCEPTABILITY FOR SUCH A PURPOSE. SOVIET COMMENTARY INCREASINGLY STRESSES THE NEED FOR MOVEMENT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS. EXAMPLES: IZVESTIYA'S AUTHORITATIVE INTERNATIONAL REVIEW, DECEMBER 28: THE VALUE OF THE (OCTOBER 1974) PROPOSAL IS THAT IT ALLOWS A PRACTICAL BEGINNING IN A MATTER OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, THE TAKING OF

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THE FIRST STEP IN THE REDUCTION OF FORCES AND ARMAMENT." THE JANUARY EDITION OF THE INSTITUTE OF WORLD ECONOMY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS' JOURNAL IN AN ARTICLE BY D. TOMASHEVSKIY: "THE FIRST-RANK SIGNIFICANCE OF THE (MBFR) NEGOTIATIONS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF ACHIEVING PRACTICAL RESULTS IN THE GIVEN AREA ARE OBVIOUS." ZA RUBEZHOM, THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS REVIEW, IN ITS JANUARY 3 EDITION: "IN THE OPINION OF OBSERVERS, THIS PROPOSAL MAKES POSSIBLE A

MOVE FROM A DISCUSSION OF POSITION TO CONCRETE STEPS--TO REAL REDUCTIONS. THESE OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT THE LONG NEGOTIATIONS ARE FINALLY ENTERING THE ACTION STAGE."

4. SOVIET INTEREST IN AN AGREEMENT. A. THE PEACE PROGRAM AND CONTINUITY. THOUGH MBFR WAS INITIALLY A WESTERN PROPOSAL, THE SOVIETS, IN PROPAGANDIZING THEIR PEACE PROGRAM, HAVE CONTINUALLY EMPHASIZED ITS IMPORTANCE IN LEADERSHIP SPEECHES AND IN COUNTLESS COMMUNIQUE. IT HAS NOW BECOME INTERTWINED WITH THE SOVIET PICTURE OF DETENTE AND HAS ASSUMED THE OUTWARD TRappings OF A MAJOR SOVIET GOAL. AS AN EXAMPLE, ZA RUBEZHOM STATED ON DECEMBER 20 THAT MBFR "IS A CONSTITUENT PART OF THE POSITIVE TENDENCY IN PRESENT INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS." WITH CSCE (ON WHICH THE SOVIETS HAVE OFTEN CONDITIONED MOVEMENT IN MBFR) NEARING A CONCLUSION, MBFR BECOMES THE LOGICAL NEXT STEP IN THE DETENTE PROCESS.

B. THE SOVIETS HAVE TRUMPETED THE WILLINGNESS OF KEY WESTERN STATES TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE USSR, AFTER THE PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY IN MID-1974, AS YET A FURTHER VICTORY OF THE PEACE PROGRAM AND ITS CORRECT EVALUATION OF THE OBJECTIVE FORCES WHICH COERCE THE WEST INTO PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE. IF THERE STATES SHOULD PROVE UNWILING TO ENTER INTO CRUCIAL ASPECT OF THE DETENTE RELATIONSHIP, A RELAXATION OF MILITARY TENSIONS IN EUROPE, THEN THE PEACE PROGRAM WILL HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO HAVE OVERESTIMATED WESTERN DESIRE AND NEED FOR DETENTE.

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C. BREZHNEV HAS INVESTED BOTH HIS NAME AND HIS PRESTIGE IN THE SUCCESS OF DETENTE NEGOTIATIONS, SPECIFICALLY INCLUDING MBFR. HE STATED IN EAST BERLIN ON OCTOBER 6, "WE ASSIGN VERY GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO THE NEGOTIATIONS BEING CONDUCTED (ON THE LIMITATION OF THE ARMS RACES) ESPECIALLY TO THOSE ON FURTHER STEPS TOWARD LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS BY THE U.S. AND THE USSR AND THOSE ON THE REDUCTION OF ARMED FORCES AND ARMAMENTS IN CENTRAL EUROPE." LACK OF MOVEMENT IN MBFR COULD BE VIEWED DOMESTICALLY AS A NEGATIVE REFLECTION ON HIS JUDGMENT OF WESTERN INTEREST IN MILITARY DETENTE AND MIGHT THEREFORE REPRESENT A SETBACK FOR HIM IN TERMS OF HIS POSITION IN THE LEADERSHIP.

D. BENEFITS IN WESTERN EUROPE. AS WE HAVE REPORTED REF A, WE SEE 1975 AS A YEAR OF CONSIDERABLE SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN EUROPE. AN MBFR AGREEMENT WOULD SERVE AT LEAST TWO OBVIOUS PURPOSES FOR THE SOVIETS IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE. FIRST, FAILURE TO REACH AN MBFR AGREEMENT WHEN A SALT II AGREEMENT IS ON THE TRACKS, OR ALREADY SIGNED, WOULD INCREASE WESTERN EUROPEAN SUSPICIONS REGARDING SOVIET PLANS TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE U.S. WHILE AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING PRESSURE ON WESTERN EUROPE. WHILE IN GENERAL THE SOVIETS ARE NOT AVERSE TO PROMOTING EUROPEAN SUSPICIONS OF U.S.-SOVIET CONDOMINIUM, THEY WOULD BE CONCERNED IF THESE SUSPICIONS WERE TRANSLATED INTO STRENGTHENED REGIONAL DEFENSE EFFORTS. SECOND AND MORE IMPORTANT, AGREEMENT ON TROOP REDUCTIONS, NO MATTER HOW LIMITED IN SCOPE, WOULD ALMOST

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CERTAINLY RESULT IN ACTUAL TROOP CUTS IN WESTERN EUROPE AT A MINIMUM AS LARGE AS THOSE PROVIDED FOR IN THE AGREEMENTS. THE SOVIETS ARE PROBABLY AWARE THAT IN A TIME OF TIGHT GOVERNMENT BUDGETS, WESTERN PARLIAMENTS, HAVING RECEIVED "PROOF" THAT DETENTE IS WORKING, COULD FORCE EVEN LARGER TROOP CUTS.

3. THE MANSFIELD AMENDMENT: SOVIET FEELINGS REGARDING THE MANSFIELD AMENDMENT ARE MIXED. WHILE ELIMINATION OF THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE IN EUROPE PROBABLY REMAINS A LONG-TERM SOVIET GOAL, THEY HAVE NOT SHOWN MUCH APPETITE FOR CONGRESSIONAL ATTEMPTS TO FORCE LARGE-SCALE AND PRECIPITATE REDUCTIONS OF U.S. TROOPS ON THE CONTINENT. (BREZHNEV'S TBILISI SPEECH IN 1971, EXPRESSING SOVIET INTEREST IN LAUNCHING MBFR, HELPED TO SINK THE FIRST VERSION OF THE MANSFIELD AMENDMENT.) MANSFIELD-TYPE REDUCTIONS WOULD LEAD, IN THEIR ESTIMATION, TO A FLOWERING OF WEST GERMAN MILITARY AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND AN INCREASE IN THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EUROGROUP UNDER WEST GERMAN DOMINATION. PASSAGE OF THE AMENDMENT BEFORE AN MBFR AGREEMENT IS REACHED COULD EFFECTIVELY KILL, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, ANY CHANCE

THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE TO WIN WEST GERMAN (AND OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN) APPROVAL TO LIMIT FORCES.

F. THE CHINA AND ECONOMIC FACTORS. TWO ELEMENTS WHICH HAVE IMPELLED MOSCOW TOWARD A DETENTE POLICY ARE A DESIRE TO STABILIZE ITS WESTERNFRONT TO FREE ITSELF FOR UNTOWARD DEVELOPMENTS IN ITS RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND A DESIRE TO FREE RESOURCES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOVIET ECONOMY. AN INITIAL MBF REDUCTION COULD HAVE AN IMMEDIATE EFFECT IN ADVANCING THE FIRST OBJECTIVE AND WOULD SERVE THE SECOND BY BEGINNING AN MBFR PROCESS WHICH COULD IN TIME HELP TO LIBERATE SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES FOR OTHER USES.

5. WHAT KIND OF AGREEMENT WOULD THE SOVIETS ACCEPT? A. SIZE OF REDUCTIONS. MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS, AS WELL AS THE POLICE FUNCTIONS OF SOVIET TROOPS IN EASTERN EUROPE, MAKE IT UNLIKELY THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD MAKE ANY EARLY MOVES AWAY FROM THEIR CONSERVATIVE APPROACH TO THE SIZE OF INITIAL REDUCTIONS. INDEED, THEY WOULD PROBABLY BE WILLING TO TALK
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SERIOUSLY OF REDUCTIONS AS LARGE AS THE 15 PERCENT THEY INITIALLY PROPOSED IN NOVEMBER 1973 ONLY IF THE AGREEMENT FOLLOWED THAT INITIAL PROPOSAL FAIRLY CLOSELY; I.E., SYMMETRICAL CUTS INCLUDING AIR FORCES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. AS THE SHAPE OF THE AGREEMENT MOVES AWAY FROM THAT IDEAL, THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY REDUCE THE SIZE OF REDUCTIONS THEY ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER.

B. WHO REDUCES FROM THE OUTSET? WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS COULD BE WILLING TO CONSIDER REDUCTIONS MADE INITIALLY BY THE TWO SUPERPOWERS IF THE LINKAGE TO LATER CUTS BY OTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANTS IS UNAMBIGUOUS, AND NOT SEPARATED BY TOO LONG A TIME SPAN. JUDGING FROM THEIR OCTOBER 1974 PROPOSAL, THIS TIME SPAN PROBABLY WOULD NOT EXCEED A YEAR BY VERY MUCH. THIS LINKAGE WILL ALSO HAVE TO INCLUDE SOME GUARANTEE THAT THE BUNDESWEHR WILL PARTICIPATE FULLY IN EARLY SECOND STAGE CUTS, AND THAT IT WILL NOT BE FREE TO BUILD ITS FORCES BACK UP AT WILL. THE SOVIETS ARE UNLIKELY TO BEND MUCH ON THE GERMAN ISSUES, WHICH WILL REMAIN ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTIONS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

C. WHAT FORCES (OR ARMAMENTS) ARE REDUCED? THIS WILL BE THE AREA INWHICH THE SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY BE MOST WILLING TO NEGOTIATE. WE BELIEVE THAT MOSCOW MAY BE WILLING TO ENTERTAIN THE IDEA OF ASYMMETRIC CUTS IN SOVIET GROUND FORCES IF COMPENSATED BY ASYMMETRIC CUTS IN U.S. WEAPONS. THE USE OF THE FORMULATION "MUTUAL CUTS OF EQUAL VALUE" IN A JANUARY 3 KRASNAYA ZVEZDA COMMENTARY (REF B)

MAY BE AN INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS ARE ALREADY CON-
SIDERING SUCH AN EVENTUALITY. SUCH ASYMMETRIC ARMAMENTS
CUTS BY THE U.S. WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO INCLUDE, IN ADDITION
TO NUCLEAR WARHEADS, AT LEAST A TOKEN CUT IN DUAL-BASED
AIRCRAFT AS WELL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SAY WHAT QUANTITATIVE
GUIDELINES THEY WOULD INSIST ON IN ESTABLISHING HOW REDUCTIONS
WOULD BE DETERMINED TO BE "OF EQUAL VALUE." WE EMPHASIZE
THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE WILLING TO BE FLEXIBLE ON SUCH A
QUESTION IF REALLY SUBSTANTIAL CUTS WERE UNDER DISCUSSION;
WITHIN CONSERVATIVE PARAMETERS, HOWEVER, THEY COULD WELL BE WILL-
ING TO EVALUATE FAIRLY GENEROUSLY ANY OFFERS OF COMPEN-
SATION WE MIGHT MAKE THEM FOR ASYMMETRIC GROUND FORCE CUTS
IN ORDER TO REACH AN AGREEMENT WHICH THEY FEEL SERVES THEIR
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LONGER-TERM INTERESTS NOTED ABOVE.

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EXDIS

D. FBS: THE MOST DIFFICULT QUESTION ASSOCIATED WITH MBFR
IS WHAT COURSE THE SOVIET UNION WILL CHOOSE TO TAKE WITH
THE FBS ISSUE. ONE COULD PERHAPS ARGUE THAT THE SOVIET
MILITARY CONSIDERS THE DECISION TO DROP FBS FROM THE SALT-
II AGENDA A SUBSTANTIAL SOVIET CONCESSION, AND THAT THIS
PARTICULAR GROUP WOULD WANT TO PUSH THE FBS ISSUE IN THE
MBFR FORUM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SOVIET MILITARY MAY

REALIZE THAT MBFR IS HARDLY THE IDEAL FORUM IN WHICH TO DISCUSS FBS. FIRST, DISCUSSION IS LIMITED TO ARMAMENTS IN THE NATO GUIDELINES AREA (NGA), WHICH EXCLUDES MANY OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT FBS. SECOND, WHAT, IN AN MBFR CONTEXT, DO THE SOVIETS HAVE TO OFFER IN EXCHANGE FOR FBS REDUCTIONS? THEIR "FORWARD BASED SYSTEMS" ARE LARGELY ON SOVIET SOIL. WITHIN THE NGA THEY HAVE LITTLE MORE TO BARGAIN WITH THAN A SUBSTANTIAL PREPONDERANCE IN GROUND FORCES. IF THEY BEGIN TO PUSH FBS TOO HARD, THEY MAY IN EFFECT BE ADVERTISING THEIR WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER SIZEABLE ASYMMETRIC GROUND FORCE CUTS. THIRD, THE SOVIETS DO NOT SEE MBFR AS A FORUM FOR THE SWEEPING CHANGE IN THEIR FORC STRUCTURE IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND WOULD HESITATE TO SET A PRECEDENT BY SUGGETING A SWEEPING CHANGE IN THE NATO FORCE STRUCTURE. LAST, TH SOVIETS PROBABLY REALIZE THAT ANY BIG PUSH ON THEIR PART ON FBS WOULD RESULT IN SO COMPLICATING MBFR THAT THE PROSPECT FOR AGREEMENT WOULD BE POSTPONED INTO THE INDEFINITE FUTUE. OF COURSE, TO SOME DEGREE THEY HAVE ALREADY INTRODUCED A LIMITED ASSAULT ON FBS BY THEIR CONTINUED INSTANCE ON REDUCTIONS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE AIR
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FORCES AND UNITS EQUIPPED WITH NUCLER WEAPONS. AS NOTED ABOVE, WE THINK THAT THEY MIGHT BE WILLING TO THAKE SMALL-SCALE ASYMMETRIC GROUND CUTS IN ORDER TO RECEIVE SMALL SCALE ASYMMETRIC CUTS IN AMERICAN WEAPONRY--INCLUDING ESPECIALLY NUCLEAR EARHEADS AND AT LEAST SOME DUAL-BASED AIRCRAFT. WHILE OUR JUDGMENT IS A HESITANT ONE, ON THE WHOLE WE DO NOT THINK THE SOVIETS WILL GREATLY INCREASE THEIR PRESSURE ON THE FBS ISSUE IN THIS STAGE OF MBFR. WE DO NOT THINK IT FITS IN WITH THEIR VIEW OF MBFR OR THAT THEY WOULD FIND MBFR AN ESPECIALLY SUITABLE FORUM IN WHICH TO PUSH US ON THEISSUE.

5. WHEN SHOULD THE AGREEMENT BE REACHED? A. THE APPARENT SOVIET DESIRE FOR MOVEMENT IN MBFR MAY BE RELATED TO THE HOPE THAT AN INITIAL AGREEMENT CAN BE COMPLETED BY NO LATER THAN LATE 1975 OR EARLY 1976, IN TIME FOR THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS. PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WOULD ALSO BE A USEFUL FEATHER IN THE SOVIET HAT AT THE UPCOMING EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTY CONFERENCE, PRESENTLY PLANNED FOR MID-1975. PROBABLE CSCE AND SALT-II AGREEMENTS WILL DO MUCH TO ENSURE THE PERCEPTION OF CONTINUITY IN DETENTE DURING 1975; AT THE SAME TIME, DEADLOCKED MBFR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD DULL DETENTE'S LUSTRE, ESPECIALLY IN RELATONS WITH WESTERN EUROPE. ALSO, SOVIET INABILITY TO FIND COMMON GROUND FOR AN AGREEMENT COULD PSSIBLY MEAN THAT SOMETIME IN 1975 MBFR COULD BE PREDECIDED ON CAPITOL HILL, WITH THE CONSEQUENT LOSS OF AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPOSE LIMITS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROGROUP AND ON THE BUNDESWEHR.

B. WHILE PERHAPS NONE OF THE ABOVE FACTORS TAKEN SINGLY IMPOSE A PRESSING TIME LIMIT ON THE SOVIETS, TAKEN TOGETHER WE BELIEVE THEY INDICATE A CONSIDERABLE SOVIET INTEREST IN MOVEMENT IN MBFR IN 1975. OF COURSE, IF A HITCH DEVELOPED TO DELAY A CSCE CONCLUSION MUCH BEYOND MID-YEAR, THE SOVIET MBFR TIME-TABLE WOULD SLIP ALSO SINCE WE STRONGLY DOUBT THAT MOSCOW WOULD BE INTERESTED IN AN MBFR AGREEMENT BEFORE CSCE IS WRAPPED UP.

6. DAO AGREES THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD BE "GENUINELY INTERESTED IN A REASONABLY EARLY MBFR AGREEMENT," BUT NOT AT THE EXPENSE OF ANY CONCESSIONS WHICH WOULD ALTER THE RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES IN THE CENTRAL AREA.

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NOR DOES DAO SEE ANY SUBSTANTIAL EVIDENCE IN THE PRES TO INDICATE THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS BECOMING MORE FLEXIBLE IN ITS APPROACH TO THE NEGOTIATIONS.

7. DEPARTMENT REPEAT AS DESIRED.
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